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CHRISTIAN COURIER

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CPJ calls on electorate to vote for poor

Bert Witvoet

TORONTO — One hour after the Prime Minister called a no-surprise election, the first election lawn signs were being hammered into the ground in various parts of Canada. It pays to be on the ball.

Citizens for Public Justice was equally alert when a day later it issued its political primer for the 1997 federal election, *Who Cares? — Political Leadership and the Common Good*, as well as a special election issue of its magazine, *Catalyst*.

So far, 26,000 copies of the political primer have been inserted in the *Catholic New Times* and the *Mennonite Reporter*. CPJ is working on funding for another 64,000 inserts in other Christian newspapers.

Survey and position

The April-May issue of *Catalyst* surveys four main parties on their principles, priorities and policies (the Bloc Quebecois declined). The Liberals, New Democrats, Reform and Progressive Conservatives were all given space to answer 20 questions ranging from electoral reform and child tax benefit to Canada's arms trade, refugee policies and the treatment of aboriginal communities.

The eight-page election primer *Who Cares?* sets forth the positions taken by CPJ as it seeks to influence the election without promoting any given party. The thrust of this paper is captured in a small picture on page six, showing a foot washing within the boxed-in text of Matthew 25:31-46.

The Bible verses present the well-known speech by Jesus about the separation of the sheep and the goats, with the sheep being those who minister to Jesus as they care for the poor, the imprisoned and the sick.

The *Who Cares?* booklet's front-page criticizes the government for eroding a national system of social programs. The original intent of this national vision was to ensure equity between individual Canadian citizens and between regions of Canada.

UNESCO SOURCES

Who cares about the unemployed?

The off-loading of responsibilities for unemployment, ill health and poverty to personal and local situations is seen by CPJ as a weakening of the original vision. It is CPJ's fear that such slippage in national programs makes the federation irrelevant and Canada weak as a nation.

In the article "Citizens are more than consumers" CPJ takes aim at how governments are adopting business models to public services and treating citizens more and more like consumers. This shifts the emphasis away from the people being served to the costs and efficiency of the service.

CPJ also believes that governments allow large corporations and financial institutions too much influence and power in their shaping of society.

In a piece called "Aboriginal Rights," CPJ supports the findings of the 1996 report by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and calls for "a fundamental restructuring of the relationship between Canada and First nations."

CPJ calls for aboriginal self-government within a Canadian federal framework. Such self-government would allow native people "to shape their educational, health, political and other social structures."

Erosion of compassion

Canada's relations to other nations gets full treatment in "Foreign policy and global justice." In it CPJ accuses the government of reducing aid to poor nations, tying aid to arrangements that benefit Canada's economy and "contributing its highest level of CIDA funding to countries with deplorable human rights records, such as China, Indonesia, India and Pakistan."

CPJ furthermore points out that Canada has one of the highest military budgets in the world, which is five times what it spends on aid and development. Also "Canada has a disturbing record of being more than willing to sell arms to countries that are known to commit human rights atrocities."

Finally, all in the same article, CPJ accuses the government of slamming the door on refugees

See **CPJ** *page 2...*

U.S. presidents ask Americans to help needy children

Alan Doerksen

PHILADELPHIA, Penn. — Former American army general Colin Powell, President Bill Clinton and several former presidents helped lead the first American summit dedicated to volunteerism, in Philadelphia in late April.

About 4,000 people representing corporations, Christian and other charitable groups met at the summit to discuss how they could help out America's neediest children. The summit set five goals:

- give children a healthy start, including health insurance and immunization;
- ensure each child has a caring adult in his or her life;
- offer children safe places and structured activities during non-school hours;
- provide education that produces marketable skills;
- instil in children a sense of service to the community and give them a chance to do volunteer work.

DAVID HUME KENNERLY

Colin Powell

Powell, who spearheaded the summit, has encouraged major corporations to pledge time, money and other resources for volunteer work focusing on needy children. The top cash pledge so far comes from Ronald McDonald House, which has pledged $100 million for child abuse prevention.

Honorary co-chairs of the summit were Bill Clinton and former president George Bush. When he announced the summit,

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News

Christian groups address poverty together

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Clinton said, "Much of the work of America cannot be done by government.... The solution must be the American people through voluntary service to others."

Jim Wallis, editor of the evangelical Christian magazine *Sojourners,* was a co-chair of the religious aspects of the summit. He also convened the pre-summit round table called Christians for a New Political Vision.

Members of a wide variety of Christian groups attended the round table meeting, representing groups such as the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Association of Evangelicals (of which the Christian Reformed Church is a member), World Vision and Habitat for Humanity.

A moral shift

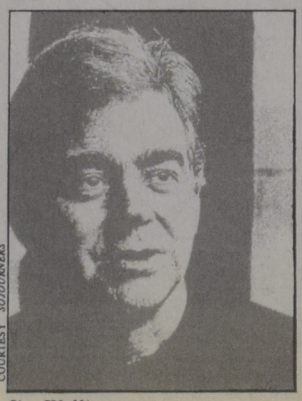
After the round table, Wallis commented, "Today we made a critical moral shift: from the old, tired debate over welfare reform to the deeper and more biblical agenda of overcoming poverty in this nation."

Discussion participants agreed they had more common ground than they had expected. "A real sense of Christian community was experienced, and the powerful potential of our coming together was widely sensed," said Wallis. "The crisis facing poor people in America may finally bring the churches back together."

According to Wallis, "The faith community should lead by example, but both government and business at all levels must also assume their responsibilities. New partnerships among government, business, churches and service providers are a vital step toward overcoming poverty."

Employment is key

Dwayne Shank, outreach director for Sojourners, said that although the round table was not



COURTESY SOJOURNERS

Jim Wallis

an attempt to come to specific agreements, more specific projects may be planned together in the future.

One central focus was: "What is the role and responsibility of the church in overcoming poverty?" he says.

Poverty is an issue that *Sojourners* magazine covers regularly. The organization also operates the Sojourners' Neighborhood Center in Washington, D.C., which offers tutoring, food distribution and a parent support group for needy families.

Shank says the Philadelphia summit was "probably the first time something like this has happened." He says that commitments of time and money by major corporations was "a good step. It would be more significant if they would provide more employment for people." One of the biggest problems related to poverty in America is "how to move people from welfare to work," Shank says.

Mixed group

Stanley Carlson-Thies, a senior fellow with the Center for Public Justice (a Reformed Christian agency based in Washington, D.C.), also took part in the round table. "It was quite a diverse group," he observes. Some groups represented what he called "advocacy churches," which focus on trying to get the government to help the poor. Others were theologically conservative churches that believe the church, not the government, should do welfare work.

Having such groups meet together was "a significant breakthrough," says Carlson-Thies. He explains that the round table "was not set up to come up with a pronouncement or commitments." Instead, it was "an attempt to start a process.... This brought together people to say this is both a crisis and an opportunity."

Many Christian groups were involved with the main summit, including some which were present at the round table as well, says Carlson-Thies. Some of the summit's workshops were focused on faith communities.

Permanent volunteers

"There was some tension between religious communities and the organizers of the meeting," he admits. One major difference of opinion was that "faith communities have never seen volunteerism as something you do in a crisis." Instead, churches see volunteerism as a regular activity — a natural part of life.

Carlson-Thies is encouraged by the commitments many major American corporations have made to help out the needy. "It represents the recognition that their existence is not merely economical but has a bigger presence."

The involvement of Powell, Clinton and several former presidents with the summit helped to raise public consciousness of poverty, remarks Carlson-Thies. "It takes a really big splash to have a high impact," he says, because there are so many high-profile events going on.

Genuine concern

Powell's involvement with the summit is "admirable," says Carlson-Thies. "There are many other things he can do with his time." After the summit, Powell has plans to launch a group called "America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth," to continue addressing issues raised by the summit.

George Bush's commitment is reflected in his Points of Light Foundation, which is boosting its commitment to draw more people into volunteering. "Jimmy Carter spends a lot of time with Habitat for Humanity," he adds.

President Clinton also has a real concern for poverty, Carlson-Thies believes. "He talks about this all the time, very sincerely." Clinton has made efforts to get churches and businesses more involved with the welfare system, which reflects the intent of the welfare bill that Clinton approved last year, says Carlson-Thies. This was also one key topic of discussion at the round table meeting, he adds.

Carlson-Thies was impressed by the concern for poverty expressed by participants in both conferences in Philadelphia, but adds that follow-up work is crucial. "The real test is to make this persist."

CPJ criticizes Canada's foreign policy

... continued from page 1

and setting up barriers such as a processing fee ($500) and a landing fee ($975). It would cost a family of four fleeing for their lives $3,150 to enter Canada.

Who Cares? raises the broader issue of the three deficits CPJ has been focusing on throughout the past year: fiscal, environmental and social (jobs, welfare, health and education). According to CPJ, the government's focus has been on the fiscal deficit, at the expense of the other deficits.

"We didn't deal with all the issues in these papers," says CPJ executive director Harry Kits. "These are the core issues around which we have some expertise. We have policies on other issues such as reproductive technology and abortion, but these are the broad crucial issues at this time."

It came somewhat as a surprise to CPJ that the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives did not really answer CPJ's question about fundamental principles. Clear answers did come from Reform and NDP on that question.

Kits finds that all parties emphasize economic growth, which is something that needs to be rethought, he believes.

Who Cares? is not intended to tell people who to vote for, says Kits. It's aim is to give people a perspective to think about.

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CHP wants to heal sick nation

CC staff

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — Leader of the Christian Heritage Party (CHP) Ron Gray says that Canada is sick and divided, and blames this plight on the fact that "the first principles of Canada's Constitution — the supremacy of God and the rule of law — have no longer guided our decision-makers."

In its policy statements, CHP says it will work "to restore ultimate legislative authority to Parliament, not non-elected judges and bureaucrats..., make every vote count through proportional representation and preserve sovereignty by combating the trend to globalism."

CHP wants to replace what it calls "the bankrupt CPP, EI and other failed plans" with an individual security account.

CHP seeks a pro-family tax credit for parents who choose to care for their children at home, create employment through interest-free capital investment in transportation and environment projects. It believes that owner-operated businesses are the prime generator of jobs.

CHP wants to restore justice by seeking restitution (criminals must repay victims and society for their crimes), "firm punishment for violent, sexual, drug and pornography crimes" and protection for every innocent human being from conception to natural death.

CHP wants to pay off the national debt like a mortgage, simplify taxes, reduce bureaucratic waste without cutting services to people and eliminate grants to special-interest groups.

Human rights groups call for inquiry into Peruvian killings

REUTERS

The family of Nestor Cerpa, leader of the Peruvian rebels, place flowers at his grave.

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO, OTTAWA — Two human rights organizations have called for an inquiry into the Peruvian government's intervention in the recent hostage crisis which resulted in the deaths of all 14 rebels, two soldiers and one hostage. The Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA) and Amnesty International have called for an inquiry because of evidence that not all the rebels needed to have been killed in the attack.

On April 23, Amnesty "called for a full, and impartial investigation into all of the killings," reports John Tackaberry, media communications officer for the agency's Canadian office in Ottawa.

Recent newspaper reports show that some of the Tupac Amaru rebels, who were holding 72 hostages in the Japanese ambassador's residence for 18 weeks, tried to surrender when Peruvian troops arrived to free the hostages. A Peruvian opposition newspaper, *La Republica*, reported that two young female rebels screamed, "We surrender! We surrender!" as soldiers attacked the residence. Cowering in a corner, the women were shot seconds later.

Some were alive

La Republica also reported that rebel leader Nestor Cerpa and other rebels were shot several times, including each taking a bullet in the forehead. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that a Peruvian firefighter who entered the residence minutes after the surprise attack said that soldiers told him they had orders to kill the rebels.

"We were told there were some alive after the attack," said the firefighter, who asked not to be identified. "The commandos chose to give them the 'coup de grace.'"

One freed hostage reported that one rebel was captured alive and was later taken away and shot.

But Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori has denied that the rebels were executed, according to the Reuters news agency. The Peruvian government has refused to turn over the rebels' bodies to relatives for autopsies or family burials. It quickly buried 13 of the rebels in unmarked graves.

Executions questioned

Because of these questionable circumstances, Amnesty has expressed its concerns to the Canadian department of Foreign Affairs and has sent a researcher to Peru to investigate.

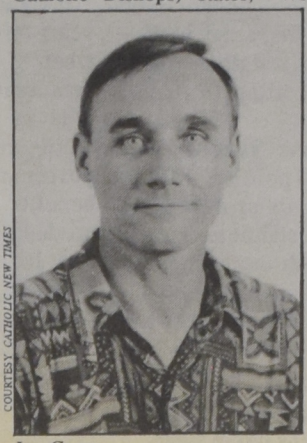
Tackaberry says that the Canadian government's first reaction to the military intervention was "it looked like a successful operation." But now he believes the government is taking a more cautious approach.

Peter Archard, an Amnesty researcher who is an expert on Peru, is now doing investigative work in Peru and Ecuador, says Tackaberry. Amnesty would like to see a further investigation done by a group such as the International Committee of the Red Cross or an independent group in Peru.

Tackaberry stresses that Amnesty is not opposing the Peruvian government's decision to take military action to end the hostage crisis. That's not a judgment for us to make, he says. "We are concerned about killings after the conflict." He adds, "Amnesty as an organization has opposed hostage-taking of any type."

Another concern that Amnesty has expressed is that the military intervention cut short attempts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. Amnesty is also concerned that the Peruvian government is holding many innocent people in prisons.

ICCHRLA has expressed its concern over the way the hostage crisis ended by writing to Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's minister of foreign affairs. In the letter, ICCHRLA co-chairperson Joe Gunn (who also represents the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops) states, "We deeply lament the fact that the military intervention has resulted in the needless death of 17 people, including one hostage, two soldiers and 14 members of the MRTA [the rebel group]."



COURTESY *CATHOLIC NEW TIMES*

Joe Gunn

Fujimori fudges the truth

Gunn criticized Fujimori's decision "to abandon all efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis," even though he had made assurances in recent hostage-crisis discussion meetings in Toronto that force would be used only if any of the hostages were harmed. Gunn also points out that Canada's Ambassador to Peru, Anthony Vincent, had visited the site of the hostage crisis just hours before the attack, and had signalled that negotiations were advancing.

"We are concerned that none of the MRTA guerrillas were taken prisoner and that all were killed in the attack," Gunn stated in his letter. "We call for an impartial investigation to determine the exact circumstances of their deaths, along with a full and public clarification of this information. Such an investigation could be conducted by Peru's ombudsman or by an international body such as the OAS [Organization of American States]."

Deplorable prisons

ICCHRLA has also expressed concern for what it calls "the deplorable and profoundly inhumane prison conditions in Peru, which fall far short of all international standards" and the "ongoing and systemic abuses of human rights by state security forces in Peru."

Kathy Price, communications co-ordinator for ICCHRLA, adds that it also expressed its concerns to the Peruvian government during the hostage crisis. Several churches that are members of ICCHRLA have expressed their concern about Peru, she says, and the committee speaks on behalf of them.

"Our concern is not in any way supportive of the MRTA," she notes. ICCHRLA has denounced the MRTA for their action in taking hostages. But Price explains, "We believe one always has to find a peaceful solution."

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Editorial

Who cares how you vote? God does

In 1962, Professor H. Evan Runner spoke at a Unionville, Ont., student conference sponsored by the Association for Reformed Scientific Studies (now Institute for Christian Studies) about a Christian's political task. I attended that series of lectures along with many others. It was one of those foundational lectures that tell you in broad strokes what Christian politics is like.

"A Christian political program can never be a one-cause platform," said Runner. Nor should it be "a collection of disparate items" that have nothing to do with religious questions. Nor is it a matter of "getting Christian *persons* into politics."

No, the Christian political task "is concerned with the *inner reformation* of political life itself. "We must discern the spirits or directions of all that cultural activity, distantiate ourselves from unbelief, and establish our goings by the light of the Word of God."

Another thing that Runner said was that the Christian political task is not an effort to further the interests of Christian communities or even Christian churches, but it must further the interest of all people — it must be for the common good. Nor, said Runner, is it a matter of winning at the polls, but it must first of all be a witness (which includes speaking and doing), to "the blessings of Christ's redemptive work."

An integrated witness

It's good to ponder these statements again 35 years after they were spoken and at a time when Canadians are called to exercise their democratic responsibility to run for office or vote in the 1997 federal elections. Runner's words ring as true today as they did when government deficits did not exist and social benefits were being established rather than eroded.

A lot of what Runner was talking about, Citizens for Public Justice is trying to implement today. Without seeking political office and without harping on a single issue or several disconnected items, CPJ offers Canadians an integrated witness to the redemptive work of Christ in at least three areas: fiscal, environmental and social concerns.

CPJ takes distance from all parties that seek, first of all, economic growth. Too much emphasis has been placed on the fiscal deficit and not enough on the social and environmental deficits, says CPJ. Warning against the idolatry of consumerism and applying a business model to the provision of services, CPJ reminds Canadians that governments exist for the positive and distinct reason of upholding justice in society.

And so CPJ asks people to care for refugees, aboriginal peoples, the unemployed, the environment and underdeveloped countries. This is the common good that Runner was talking about.

Addresses moral deficit

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has also issued an election guide to Christians and churches, although its guide understandably contains much less substance and detailed analysis than CPJ's papers do. EFC is not first of all a public justice organization. In addition to pointing to fiscal, social and environmental problems, the EFC guide highlights the spiritual and moral deficit of Canadian society and government.

EFC encourages dialogue with candidates on the following moral issues: defining marriage, providing legal protection for the unborn, prohibiting euthanasia and human cloning, addressing the depiction of violence and pornography in the media, evaluating the criminal justice system, and affirming the right of religious organizations to act with integrity in its teaching and hiring practices.

Our witness must be comprehensive

If there is one criticism we have of CPJ's election bulletins, it is that CPJ did not address any of these moral deficits. We know that CPJ has policies on some of these issues, so we do not call into question their total program. But why did they not state these policies as a guide in this election?

It has always been our contention that Canada suffers as much from lack of caring as it does from lack of obedience to God's wise laws for life. Poverty is a debilitating condition that places terrible strains on individuals and communities. But immorality and lack of respect for the sanctity of life and marriage also destroys individuals and communities.

How does one fight dysfunctionalism, alcoholism, abuse, neglect and abortion? By improving social conditions? That's one way. But is that enough? Can a nation that refuses to curb evil stay healthy?

A costly challenge

H. Evan Runner put it this way in his 1962 Unionville lecture: "Christian love involves the world and our fellow-man in a very real way, but in such a way as to bring them into subjection to the life-constituting and life-preserving Law of God. There is no genuine love of the neighbor that is not at the same time and in the first place a wholehearted love of God who has revealed himself in his Law-word."

"The time may come when to engage in such a witness will cost you your head," Runner said. "Indeed, this very day there are Christians whose heads are being cut off, so to speak, and we must pray for them every day, not that they will 'win at the polls,' but that they may stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

It seems then that to be a faithful witness politically will not be an easy matter, especially if we tackle such giants as materialism and consumerism, economic growth and self-interest, corporate power and secularism, gambling and self-gratification. Casting a secret ballot in an election booth hardly counts as risking one's head. Speaking up at candidates' meetings or talking to your neighbors might qualify. Being willing to lose economic power by supporting justice issues so that the underprivileged members of our society may be empowered may also be acceptable.

Who cares about our neighbor, our social infrastructure, the creation, God? Do you? **BW**

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Comment

Let's face it: English is a crazy language

Anonymous

There is no egg in eggplant or ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple.

English muffins were not invented in England, nor french fries in France.

Sweetmeats are candies, while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea, nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write, but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce, and hammers don't ham?

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth?

The world's oldest publisher still in existence is Cambridge University Press, publishing since 1584.

One goose, 2 geese. So, one moose, 2 meese? One index, two indices? Is cheese the plural of choose?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?

If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

In what language do people recite a play, and play a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell?

Park on driveways and drive on parkways?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

When a house burns up, it burns down.

You fill in a form by filling it out and an alarm clock goes off by going on.

When the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

And why, when I wind up my watch, I start it, but when I wind up this essay, I end it?

Now I know why I flunked my English. It's not my fault -- the silly language doesn't quite know whether it's coming or going.

The plural of paradox is paradise.

Do you get a chance or an opportunity?

Tymen E. Hofman

One need not be a specialist to know that language changes. Sometimes a change revitalizes a language; sometimes it impoverishes it.

A change in language that I lament is substituting a different word to describe a concept which has always had a clear and specific identification. One such concept is what we have always called "opportunity."

Something is opportune when it occurs at an appropriate time or involves a favorable juncture of circumstances. Opportunities develop, can be sensed or sought out and are often the setting for the challenges that come to us in life.

I am convinced that the so-called Parable of the Talents does not focus on our talents or abilities, but on the *opportunities* for service the Lord hands out to his servants, according to their abilities. "Opportunity" is a concept of great depth and riches.

But some people have lost this word from their vocabulary, using, instead, the word "chance." I hear: "I have a chance to go to China." "We have a chance to go to church."

To me the basic thrust of chance doesn't begin to do justice to what is involved in the opportunity to do something. "Chance" is a close relative of "luck." It is something random, capricious and unpredictable. It takes distance from what we would call divine providence.

"Opportunity," however, is pregnant with the sense of providence. It is a great word that allows us to think through the challenges of the Kingdom of Christ. It is wonderful to be alive and challenged with the opportunity for service and stewardship.

Tymen E. Hofman is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Neanderthal man is so called because the first Neanderthal fossil, the top of a skull, was found in the Neander Gorge near Düsseldorf, Germany.

Letter

Why not a CRC seminary in Canada?

We Canadians in the Christian Reformed Church have been challenged by Calvin Theological Seminary and its board to raise $400,000 as an incentive for Canadian students to enter the ministry. (They call it the Canadian Covenant.) These monies plus another $200,000 U.S. will be used to purchase further condominium-style housing near the seminary.

Wouldn't it be a much simpler and a whole lot cheaper solution to the problem if Canada had its own theological seminary? The Canadian Reformed Churches in Canada are much smaller than the Canadian segment of the CRC. That denomination has had its own seminary for years in Hamilton. We could do the same thing.

The CRC in Canada has another great advantage: it has in Redeemer College and in The King's University College all the facilities needed for a seminary. Particularly The King's University College has too many condominiums; these are rented out to other people or organizations! We are told that every person seeking to enter the ministry of the Word in the CRC needs to take training in Grand Rapids. This almost sounds as if it is a scriptural prerequisite!

If Canada must raise $400,000 for the training of its ministers, let the training be in Canada. And it would not be out of place if the U.S. segment of the CRC for once would support the Canadians by adding the $200,000.

Personally, I hope that similar proposals from all across Canada will reach the Calvin Theological Seminary and its board.

Syrt Wolters
Victoria, B.C.

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Calvin fills Spoelhof chair

Professor is expert on gender issues

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Dr. Helen M. Sterk, currently a professor in the department of communication studies at Marquette University, has been appointed the next William Spoelhof Teacher-Scholar-In-Residence at Calvin College.

The appointment, which still requires ratification by the Calvin board of trustees, will make Sterk the third holder of the Spoelhof Chair, following C. Stephen Evans (philosophy) and Janel Curry-Roper (geography). The chair was established in 1994 by Stanley and Harriet Van Reken to honor Calvin president emeritus William Spoelhof, with the goal being to bring to Calvin College gifted teacher-scholars to enrich the intellectual life of the campus.

From Marilyn Monroe to Joan of Arc

Calvin believes it has again found such a person in Sterk, a 1974 graduate of Calvin who has taught at Marquette since 1985. Her specialty is the study of rhetoric, with a special emphasis on women's voices and gender issues in public discourse. In 1989-1990, Sterk, a native of Waupun, Wisc., participated in a major study of gender issues sponsored by the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship and contributed chapters to the resulting book *After Eden: Meeting the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation* (1993).

Sterk lectures widely on such topics as diverse as Marilyn Monroe, Joan of Arc and women pastors, and has written on television programs such as "NYPD Blue" and the intersection of race and gender in "Designing Women." Her PhD dissertation at Iowa was on the rhetoric of Silhouette romance novels.

An archive Sterk has developed, housed at Marquette, is called The Birthing Project. It includes transcripts of more than 100 interviews with women whose stories represent a variety of experiences, ethnic groups, socio-economic classes and birthplaces describing their experiences of birthing.

An interdisciplinary book, edited by Sterk and including chapters from the perspectives of rhetoric, anthropology, history, English and midwifery, is currently being published by Michigan State University Press.

Sterk considers herself to be a feminist, saying "My current research projects integrate faith and feminism in a positive way.... I realized I needed to turn to productive rather than critical approaches to gender." She decided to shift her interest to "women's ability to make good things happen even in repressive situations."

She also is working on a new kind of communication theory, one that is based on "care rather than power." Her theory draws on current work in communication studies and philosophy and emphasizes that "humans need to connect," that our need for "community and love drive us to seek ways to communicate."

Co-operation: a fading buzzword?

Pedagogeries

Alyce Oosterhuis

Last Saturday, almost 100 graduates received their BA, B.Sc., or B.Ed. degrees at the King's convocation. Parents, friends and college supporters were plentiful at the ceremony and celebration. And as everyone milled about at the reception and banquet, it was not unusual to hear people ask the faculty: "What will you do now for the next four summer months?"

The question is raised every year and the answer is inevitably the same: research, conferences, writing and presenting papers. What most people probably do not realize is that the summer months are also inevitably a time for co-operative education in action.

What does that mean? At the college level, co-operative education means that faculty members critique, edit and proofread each other's papers and research projects; collaborate with others in the laboratory; organize think-tanks to generate new ideas and/or solutions; and travel to debate their theories and findings with their peers.

Co-operative education is crucial at the university level as individuals work in teams to stimulate and encourage each other. Co-operation is also increasingly being rewarded financially as government grants are becoming contingent upon demonstrated co-operation between faculty members at colleges and universities across the province.

A balancing act

Co-operative education has been the "buzzword" of the last decade in our educational system as students are assigned to group work, centres and team projects in subjects across the curriculum and the grades. We encourage co-operative efforts when students sign their names as a group to a joint project. Individual students often chafe at the demanded co-operation when their team includes the "free loader" who does no work for the project or the "team controller" who does all the work because he or she does not trust the other team members to do a good job. Co-operative education, as we often experience it, provides enhanced individual recognition for team members and their final project. Such co-operative efforts are usually applauded and awarded with high grades and individual accolades, and accompanied with comments about preparing students for a more co-operative society.

However, if we truly wished to have a more co-operative society, we should probably have more unsung "heroes" than merit awards. A co-operative society works as a group to maintain and/or enhance itself; the individual does not demand recognition for his or her contributions to the welfare of all. The only model we have had for co-operation in our individualistic society is the family, and as family members increasingly branch out to "do their own thing," this co-operative model is also being eroded.

Not focusing on one's self

Genuine co-operation emphasizes the activity of doing things together, of learning to give and take with others, of being mutually involved in the process. It does not ask: "What's in it for me? How can this enhance my grades? my career? my fame?" True co-operation is modelled when one faculty member proofreads another's manuscript without acknowledgment; when a fellow student suggests improvements to a project without demanding extra points; when a parent recommends changes to an essay and the child is not accused of cheating. Co-operative education ought to say: "Together we are learning to give of each other's gifts for the welfare of all."

Of course, what really undermines co-operative education in our society is the report card. If we could have anecdotal assessments of students' learning processes and abilities from Kindergarten through university, there would be less need for continually rank individuals relative to each other and the course contents. At the university level, the '70s saw a pass/fail system in place in many departments; the system was abolished upon student requests because scholarship applications required individuals' standing relative to their peers. In our predominantly individualistic society, co-operative education is an elusive ideal, a misnomer, a delusion.

Does that mean I will now give up in encouraging co-operation in our Christian schools? No, because ideals need to be fostered, examined, discussed and realized if imperfectly. And so I will continue to encourage my students to find editors who, without recognition, improve their writing; I will continue to find tutors for those who need help; I will insist on groups that make learning together an enjoyable exercise; I will hold the team accountable for its productions.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis teaches education and psychology at The King's University College in Edmonton.

Dordt unites with Korean university

Jim De Young

SIOUX CENTER, Iowa — Dordt College has announced the signing of a formal agreement with Kosin University in Pusan, South Korea, establishing a "sister college" relationship between the two Christian institutions.

The agreement is the culmination of a relationship that began several years ago when Dr. Sung Soo Kim of Kosin University spent a year in the Dordt College Studies Institute. Kosin University, like Dordt, is based upon principles of the Reformed faith, and Kim, as professor of education at Kosin, was interested in studying how Dordt integrates its Reformed perspective in education. Kim is now the vice-president for academic affairs at Kosin University. His son, Hyunie, is a freshman at Dordt.

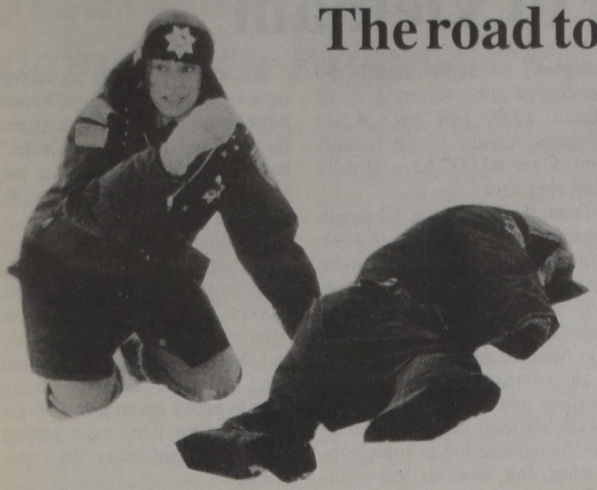
Dordt personnel have also spent time on Kosin's campus. Dr. John Hulst (now emeritus president), professor John Vander Stelt and former professor Kenn Hermann have all lectured at Kosin in the past two years. According to Hulst, who recently returned from visiting Kosin for its 50th anniversary, the agreement will help the two institutions continue to work together in promoting Christ-centred higher education.

Dordt College officials say that the new union will provide Dordt with the opportunity for greater international and cross-cultural interaction. Faculty and student exchanges, joint research and co-operative sponsorship of conferences and academic programs are among the ideas being discussed by the two institutions.

"This really is an expression of our desire to be linked internationally with other Christian institutions," says Dordt President Carl Zylstra. "It is a formal declaration of our intention to work together."

Video Review

The road to *Fargo* a strange but compelling trip



Marian Van Til

Fargo

Frances McDormand, William H. Macy, Harve Presnell, Steve Buscemi, Peter Stormarc. Written by Ethan and Joel Coen. Directed by Joel Coen.

Fargo was one of the 1996 Academy Award nominees for Best Picture; and Frances McDormand, who plays the seven-month-pregnant police chief Marge Olmsted, won the Best Actress Oscar. It's easy to see why critics loved this movie but why it was only a blip at the box office. It is too quirky and requires more thought than is likely to appeal to the mass audiences that like to watch fare like *Independence Day* and *Volcano*.

Fargo's first obvious quirk: Fargo, North Dakota, is not actually where the movie is centred; Brainerd, Minnesota, is (and to a lesser extent, Minneapolis).

In fact, if I were from Fargo I might consider it a dubious honor to have this film bear the name of my town. One might expect a greedy car dealer or two in a big city like Minneapolis. But one wouldn't be looking for two kidnappers-turned-murderers in Fargo. Yet the film's two sick, greed-obsessed crooks are the only thing associated with Fargo. The solid citizens are from Brainerd (a nice, quiet town, as I recall from passing through there a few times during my Dordt College days way back when).

Greed kills the spirit

Jerry Lundegaard is the sales manager at his father-in-law's car dealership in Minneapolis. Jerry is trying to crawl up the ladder of suburban success, but doesn't have the moral fortitude to be anything but an obnoxious loser. He is irritating, weaselly and has chronic money problems. Even his father-in-law views him with contempt. (William H. Macy, who has the occasional role of Dr. Morgenstern on TV's wildly popular *ER*, masterfully avoids turning this unlikable character into a caricature, and was nominated for the Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his efforts.)

The only person seemingly oblivious to Jerry's faults is his naive, ditsy wife whom, ironically, Jerry is planning to have kidnapped so he can collect a hefty part of the ransom money he's sure his father-in-law will put up for her.

To do the job, Jerry hires two guys, Carl and Caesar, he's heard about from one of his dealership's mechanics. These two are the odious products of a superficial society sinking under the weight of its own materialism. They are obsessed with their own self-gratification, material and sexual. Caesar, especially, gives no thought to doing away with anyone who gets in the way of his pursuits, or even who merely annoys him along the way.

Fargo's moral becomes more and more painfully obvious: greed can eat away people's souls, turning them into ruthless, subhuman monsters.

The violence perpetrated by Carl and Caesar is horrificly arbitrary, dispatched with a cold-blooded nonchalance. What is disturbing to realize is that Jerry, for all his supposed middle-class respectability, is really cut from the same cloth. There's little, if any, moral distance between these low-class losers and the grasping car salesman.

Love among the ruins

But set in high relief against the avarice-inspired violence is the stability and solid morality of the citizens of Brainerd, exemplified in police chief Marge Olmsted, in her artist-sculptor husband, Norm, in another cop, and in one or two other minor characters.

These people are the descendants of the staunch, imperturbable Scandinavian Lutherans who settled the area in the 19th century. Margie is a salt-of-the-earth type, committed to ferreting out justice, but just as committed to her marriage and their unborn child. Though we see Norm only briefly, it's long enough for the film to establish a giving, affectionate relationship between Marge and Norm, seen in the little, daily events of their lives: when she gets the very-early-morning call to come and investigate a couple of dead bodies, Norm insists on getting up with her and making her (and unborn junior) an eggs-and-toast breakfast. When Norm despairs that his duck design won't be chosen for the new three-cent stamp, Marge insists he'll win — and she really believes it. And when Norm still resigns himself to possible defeat, softening the blow with the thought that, well, no one uses three-cent stamps anymore anyway, Marge cheers him up with: sure they do; people need them every time postage goes up.

The Midwestern setting/landscape seems as much a character in *Fargo* as any of the human characters are. Joel and Ethan Coen, brothers from New York City, have captured remarkably well (and have only slightly exaggerated) the stalwart nature of the area's inhabitants, molded as they have been by frigid winters, short summers, windswept landscapes and the isolation of distance. The Coens also apprehend the deliberate speech and colloquial interjections ("You bet!") of these rural Minnesotans, their sentences often punctuated with a "yeah" that sounds more like the "ja" of their Scandinavian forebears.

Your speech betrays you

Perhaps the film's compelling nature comes from the fact that the Coens are simply good storytellers. They know how to pare a story down to its essentials, making its emotional impact cumulative, and, thus, all the more forceful. It's almost odd, then, that the amount of vulgar language they put in the mouths of the kidnappers and the car salesman is gratuitous (there are also more sexual allusions than are necessary). The language surely grates on a Christian's sensibilities. The Coens might argue that what comes out of a man shows what's in his heart, and in their story, these men are beyond redemption. On the other hand, the "redeemed" ones — Marge, et al — utter nary a bad word.

Calvin hosts young authors' festival

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The 21st Annual Young Authors' Festival was held at Calvin College on May 3. Sponsored by the Calvin College English Department, the festival brought nearly 800 local "young authors" between grades one and six to the campus for a morning of fun with literature.

The event had a two-pronged focus. Students in grades one through three had a chance to hear a talk by renowned illustrator Stephen Johnson. Grade four and six students heard from award-winning author Kathryn Lasky. After the two talks, the students broke into groups of eight to 10 for discussions of their own original writings from the 1996-97 school year. The writings could be poetry, fiction or non-fiction, but had to be original works. The discussion groups were led by Calvin College students.

While students were busy in these groups, their teachers met with and interviewed Johnson and Lasky.

Johnson lives in New York and works as a painter and illustrator. His book *Alphabet City* was selected as a Caldecoot Honor Book and received other major awards for illustration. Lasky, of Boston, has written a variety of books, from historical fiction to picture books to non-fiction. She has received the Newbery Honor Book and National Jewish Book awards, and the American Library Association's Best Book for Young Adults.

Ellen 'came out,' ads didn't

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (EP) — "Ellen" may have "come out," but that doesn't mean that overtly homosexual ads have come in. ABC refused to air a 15-second commercial by a lesbian travel service during the April 30 episode of the situation comedy "Ellen" in which the title character acknowledged that she is a lesbian. The agency tried to get around the network's refusal by placing the ad with local affiliates in major markets.

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'Barbed-wire Christians' return to Vietnam

HONG KONG (Compass) — Among the 53,173 Vietnamese refugees being repatriated from camps in Hong Kong are hundreds of "barbed-wire Christians" — so called because they converted to the Christian faith in prison-like holding camps.

In an otherwise sad story, a missionary worker in the camps told *Compass* "The exciting thing is that since 1988 most Vietnamese refugees came from northern Vietnam, so these new Christians are going home to a part of Vietnam that has traditionally been very resistant to the gospel." Some returnees, however, have reported being persecuted.

Christian workers in the Hong Kong camps confide that "80 per cent of all Christian converts give up their faith when they return to Vietnam..., usually due to family and cultural pressures."

Another factor is that since they go back to the north of Vietnam, there are few churches and pastors to nourish them in the faith — a stark contrast to southern Vietnam where the bulk of Vietnam's 500,000 plus Protestants live and worship.

Unsettling changes

Literally hundreds of thousands fled Vietnam in the late 1970s in leaky boats. Initially they were mostly ethnic Chinese, fleeing the backlash against the wealthy community by the new Communist regime of 1975. Hong Kong became the main refugee holding centre.

In 1982 the camps were "closed," that is, the refugees were not allowed to work in Hong Kong while their applications for resettlement were processed, but were detained in poor prison conditions. This was supposed to act as a deterrent to potential refugees, as Western countries struggled to resettle those who had already come out.

In 1988 a further change was introduced when all refugees arriving after June 16 had to prove "a well founded fear of persecution" or face repatriation as an economic migrant.

In 1991 the Hong Kong government began to repatriate those found to be "economic refugees" — approximately 90 per cent of those screened. As of March 1997, just over 4,500 refugees remain to be repatriated. Over 40,000 have already been sent back.

From the beginning, Christian organizations helped in administering social services in the camps. Groups like World Relief, Caritas, Salvation Army and the Christian and Missionary Alliance had full-time staff in the camps providing medical supplies and operating schools. Inevitably their influence among the Vietnamese led to some conversion, but most of the evangelism was done by Vietnamese Christians themselves.

Christ had the answer

Sometimes the turning to Christ was extensive. Said a missionary worker, "In Chi Mah Wan camp in 1981 the Lord used a Vietnamese Christian called Dr. Lei Ngoc Vinh (now in the U.S.) to bring revival there. I supplied him some Emmaus Bible Courses, which he translated and soon was leading over 30 Bible studies. About 15 per cent of the 3,000 refugees in the camp converted."

By the late 1980s most refugees were not ethnic Chinese but North Vietnamese. Shattered by their arrival after the "rules" had changed, many became bitter because they could not be resettled in third countries.

Hundreds found Christ in the midst of their disappointment and, according to a missions worker in two of the camps, "They realized that maybe God had brought them out to find him, and now they should go back to speak about him." Many of these Christians were among the first to volunteer for repatriation.

One Christian returnee told a relief worker, "The north of my country is very communist, with few churches. I would never had encountered the gospel had I stayed. Now that I am going back, it will be hard to stand up for Christ."

Some mission workers told *Compass* that, "Missions must link in with existing Vietnamese Christian networks to provide a context of support and encouragement for the returnees, otherwise this opportunity to reach northern Vietnam will be lost."

Calvin College initiates ambitious sign language policy

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — A new policy at Calvin College will help the college serve deaf students and constituents better.

Effective immediately, Calvin will — if requested at least 48 hours ahead of time — provide sign language interpretation at all college-sponsored public lectures.

"Adequate communications, particularly with those who are blind or deaf, are major emphasis in federal antidiscrimination law," said Jim MacKenzie, a member of Calvin's campus accessibility advisory committee. "Many people who need interpreters in order to fully participate in campus life do not know of their right to request an interpreter, and many sponsors of public events do not advertise their willingness to provide interpreters. As a result deaf people can become marginalized; a de facto segregation takes place. We want to help break down those barriers for deaf people."

Calvin will cover all the costs of interpreters. For now the campus accessibility committee has set up an "Interpreter Fund" and campus organizations can draw on that fund, if necessary, when interpreters are hired. Eventually organizations are expected to build interpreter costs into their budgets when planning public lectures and events.

Education professor Tom Hoeksema is a member of the accessibility committee and is excited about the policy and the work of the committee. "This is the fourth year we've had this committee on campus and it's a wonderful thing," he says. "It gives our students with disabilities a voice and it leads our community to thinking about accessibility issues with more and more regularity."

For the community

Hoeksema notes that Calvin does a good job for its students with disabilities, but says the new sign language policy will continue the expansion of the college's efforts to address its responsibilities to the broader community.

MacKenzie adds that under the new policy, Calvin's annual commencement ceremony (to be held this year on Saturday, May 17 in the Calvin Fieldhouse) will be interpreted automatically. Calvin's commencement had been interpreted occasionally over the years — generally at the request of students with deaf relatives.

Afraid to be 'biblical'?

ATLANTA, Ga. (EP) — *Biblical Archaeologist* magazine is changing its name. The American Schools of Oriental Research, which has published the magazine since its founding in 1938, voted to change its name to *Near Eastern Archaeology*, distancing itself from organized religion. The change comes despite a survey of subscribers which found overwhelming support for the former name — 84 per cent of its readership supported the old name, including 73 per cent who said they "strongly" supported the traditional name.

"While it is risky (as well as regrettable) to surrender a 60-year-old tradition, maintaining the status quo represents the greater risk," the magazine said, explaining the change to its 3,600 subscribers. An article on the name change suggested that the word "biblical" may be keeping subscribers and contributors away from the magazine. However, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, which aims at a more general audience, has a circulation of 200,000.

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Ralph Reed leaving Christian Coalition

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — Ralph Reed, who helped mold the Christian Coalition into one of the U.S.'s most influential political forces, announced April 23 that he will resign in September as director of the group.

Reed said he planned to establish a political consulting firm to help pro-life conservatives win public office, but said he has no plans to seek elective office himself. The firm, Century Strategics, will probably be located in Georgia, Reed's home state.

Reed, known for his boyish looks, spent eight years at the helm of the Christian Coalition, which was created by Christian broadcaster Pat Robertson. Under Reed's leadership the organization grew to claim 1.9 million dues-paying members in nearly 2,000 chapters, and last year saw its budget climb to $27 million from $200,000 in 1989. Before last November's elections the Christian Coalition distributed 45 million "voter guides" in 125,000 churches across the U.S.

Jesus film wildly popular in Egypt

TORONTO (Can. Bible Soc.) — When Ramez Atallah, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Egypt and his wife, Rebecca stopped to give an elderly man a ride home, little did they know the surprising outcome that this simple act of kindness would bring.

It was the day of the Muslim fasting month Ramadan. Ramez and Rebecca were driving along the deserted streets of Cairo, just after breaking of the fast when everyone was home eating. As they drove along they saw an old, crippled man waiting for a bus. Knowing that he would be waiting for a very long time, they offered him a ride. Ramez helped the old man into the back of the car. His clothes were tattered and he was carrying a bag of food scraps.

They drove him as far as they could. As he got out of the car Ramez gave him a Scripture selection. The man thanked him, then upon noticing that it was a Bible Society publication he asked, "Do you have the film?"

Ramez was startled, he thought he knew what the man meant but wasn't certain, so asked, ""What film?" "The Jesus Film," replied the man, as though everyone in Cairo, the "Hollywood" of the Middle East, should know which film he meant!

At a recent Cairo book fair, Bible Society workers were on their feet from morning until night trying to keep up with thousands of customers. By the middle of the second week the number of visitors had topped one million. While other publishers were sitting around bored all day complaining of poor sales, Bible Society staff were run off their feet!

The reason for the book fair being such a hit this year was the *Jesus Film Project* and its accompanying media blitz. The project includes the Jesus Film and a giveaway New Testament from the Bible Society in Egypt. Tens of thousands of these packages were sold making it the hit of the 1997 book fair.

Muslims promote Jesus

Many publishers, realizing that the Jesus Film was bringing in the crowds, asked for quantities to sell. One of the largest publishers in the country conveniently placed stacks of the film next to the cash register because it was in such demand. Even Muslim publishers were grateful for the *Jesus Film Project* because they felt it was instrumental in drawing the crowds to the fair. "If it were not for the Bible Society, no customers would have come to that part of the fair," one Muslim publisher was heard saying.

Staff at the Bible Society of Egypt are left scratching their heads, wondering why the Scriptures are suddenly so popular. The rapid acceptance of the Jesus Film is nothing less than a miracle in a country where last year, journalists and religious leaders condemned the depiction of prophets in film. What's even more incredible is that the Jesus Film package is fast becoming a national best-seller.

CRWRC responds to Red River flood in Canada

Keith Knight

BURLINGTON, Ont. — The Canadian branch of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) has committed resources to helping southern Manitobans rebuild their lives in the wake of extensive flooding of the Red River.

Disaster relief co-ordinator Jacob Kramer, who is spearheading CRWRC's "Red River Response," says a call for volunteers has gone out to Christian Reformed congregations across Canada to converge upon the Red River area once the water has subsided. He says volunteers, especially students, are being asked to offer one or two weeks of their time to help mop up damaged homes and farms.

As one of the 13 member agencies of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, CRWRC is aware that several of the affected farms south of Winnipeg collectively donate 4,000 tonnes of grain annually to the foodgrains bank. "This is an appropriate time for us to show our gratitude to them," Kramer says.

CRWRC Canada has already responded to immediate needs through Disaster Child Care by providing volunteer women to look after mothers and children in special shelters. "Thankfully, disasters of this magnitude rarely occur in Canada, but this does give Canadians an opportunity to respond in significant ways," says Kramer.

Meanwhile, several CRCs have telephoned CRWRC proposing to immediately schedule offerings for Red River Response.

The Spirit itself

Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
✱ Al Wolters

"The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom.8:16, KJV)

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Rom.8:16, NIV).

This verse illustrates one of the problems which face translators of the Bible into contemporary English. It is the problem of gender and pronouns, which is a particularly acute one in today's gender-conscious climate. Should the text here read "the Spirit *itself*" or "*himself*" — or perhaps "*herself*"?

The difficulty is that English pronouns relate to gender in a way different from pronouns of most other languages, including Hebrew and Greek. As a result, the structure of the English language forces the translator to make choices which are not decided by the text he or she is translating.

In this case, the translator must decide whether "spirit" is a person or a thing. If the "spirit" refers to an impersonal power or force, then the rules of modern English dictate that we say "the spirit itself." But if the "spirit" (or "Spirit") is a divine person — and it is pretty clear from this and many other passages in the New Testament that the Spirit of God is indeed a person — then we have the further problem that English forces us to use either "himself" or "herself."

The English language has no pronoun for referring to a person without at the same time designating that person's gender. Consequently, speakers of English, if they do not want to refer to the Holy Spirit of the New Testament with the impersonal "it," have no choice but to use either "he" or "she." Traditionally, the masculine pronoun has been used.

The Spirit is neuter in Greek

The original Greek does not help us here, because the Greek word for "spirit," *pneuma*, is grammatically neuter (neither masculine nor feminine), and therefore the pronoun that goes with it (*auto*) is also neuter. This does not mean that the Apostle Paul thought of the Spirit as ungendered, since neuter nouns in Greek often refer to masculine or feminine persons. As a matter of fact, in this same verse the word for "children," *tekna*, illustrates this point, since *tekna* is also neuter in Greek. We find the same situation in Dutch and German, where the regular word for "girl," for example, is grammatically neuter ("*het* meisje"; "*das* Madchen"). The Greek does not help us in choosing between "he" and "she" as the appropriate pronoun for the Holy Spirit.

We can see how other contemporary translations have struggled with this issue. The Revised English Bible, for example, translates our verse as follows: *The Spirit of God affirms to our spirit that we are God's children*, and the New Revised Standard Version has this rendering: *It is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

It is clear that both versions deliberately avoid the issue; the REB does not translate the pronoun at all, and the NRSV chooses a gender-neutral equivalent.

Gender bias?

This, of course, raises the question: if the original language does not specify the Spirit's gender, what justification is there for the traditional masculine usage in English? Is this another example of the pervasive bias which favors the masculine over the feminine? Besides, isn't it true that the *Hebrew* word for "spirit" is feminine, so that there is explicit justification for speaking of the Holy Spirit as a "she" rather than "he"? More on this in my next column.

In the mean time, let's not allow the issue of the appropriate English pronoun in this verse to distract us from the basic point which it makes. God's own Spirit assures us that in Christ we may call ourselves the sons and daughters of the heavenly Father.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He recently served on an ecclesiastical study committee investigating the issue of "inclusive language for God."

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Feature

How a homegrown Christian got lost... and found

From a cynical feminist to positive feminist and radical evangelist

BERT WITVOET

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — The road to Christ was not a smooth one for Renate Kok. And it didn't get any smoother when the Lord roared at her from Zion a la Amos.

It started out rather evenly. Born in Heerde, the Netherlands, in 1949, she immigrated with her parents Evert and Lynn Kok to Canada in 1954. Settling in Toronto, she attended Timothy Christian School, Toronto District Christian High School and Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. You couldn't find a better prescription for evenness.

A loss of innocence

After that, she returned to Holland to study art history and, in particular, modern art at the Free University of Amsterdam under Hans Rookmaker. That period of seven years of doctoral studies must have jarred something loose in her. Modern art is not exactly a sweet-by-and-by kind of study and it tends to turn a person away from easy answers.

In 1980, Renate (also known as Renee) returned to Canada to teach contemporary art history at the Ontario College of Art. That lasted five years. In the meantime she had become a radical, secular feminist. She had no use for a church like the Christian Reformed Church that did not empower women.

It was at this time that she got a grant to do further art history studies, and she selected feminist studies. but since she returned to Amsterdam, and Holland was not really the place to do feminist art studies at the time, she gave up on this project, got a job and started a little business.

Her involvement in avant garde art gradually changed her lifestyle. She stopped going to church entirely. In fact, she was very cynical about church, partly because she had experienced a church fight and split in the Second Christian Reformed Church of Toronto. She submerged herself in the world of art show openings and parties that involved drinking and "party" drugs.

She was still listening to religious music — the gospel songs and spirituals of Mahalia Jackson (Rookmaker had introduced her to Mahalia) and classical stuff like Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. "It was a soother more than anything," recalls Renate. "It was a kind of Paraclete, except I would never have acknowledged that."

A choice between life and death

But then she had what she calls "a Damascus Road experience." She had taken some drugs that had brought her into convulsions. The memory of that experience is not pleasant, to say the least.

"I saw my life going before me. God showed me that I had to choose between life and death," says Renate. "There was nothing gentle about the Holy Spirit. It was a struggle between Satan and God. God does roar, as he did through the prophet Amos," she adds with a smile.

It took Renate a year to confirm her choice. In the meantime she started sneaking in and out of church.

She ended up in an Anglican church in Amsterdam. It was an evangelical and caring community. There were a lot of expatriates there as well as a sizable group of street people floating in and out. The latter were there because the church bordered on the Red Light district and was next to a VD clinic.

A tent-making ministry

Before she knew it, Renate got involved in the work of the church. Her knowledge of Scripture and the Christian faith picked up at home and in Christian schools stood her in good stead now. She soon led home groups and became part of the leadership of the church.

But a lot of healing had to take place within her. The experience brought her back to God, not so much back to the church, says Renate. "I was very suspicious of the church. My experience back home and the fact that the Reformed churches in Holland were nothing to write home about did not help."

Theological studies

And thus started her "tent-making" ministry, as she moved into the church building, worked part-time elsewhere and got involved in helping prostitutes and drug addicts. She became the first woman church warden in Amsterdam, which meant she helped oversee the general running of the parish as well as its spiritual life, like an "underseer" rather than as an "overseer," she says. "You alert people when things go wrong."

In 1995, Renate decided to enter Wycliffe Hall at Oxford University in England, which is a seminary affiliated with the Church of England. She felt a real need to go into full-time ministry, and a lot of people prompted her to do it as well.

Although she took the full course, which normally leads to priesthood, she has no intention of becoming a parish priest in the traditional sense. Her heart is in mission, which she believes must emanate from, and be at the heart of, the church.

As part of her studies, which she hopes to complete this June, Renate attended the Toronto School of Theology for four months, which was not an easy experience for someone like her who was on fire for the Lord. She was dismayed at the lack of faithfulness to the Scriptures she encountered at this school.

Renate is not too worried about which denomination she will be affiliated with. "I feel the denominations are melting," she says. "My commitment is to Jesus Christ, to the gospel. I am looking for ways to make the church a mission church."

She was deeply affected by her summer placement in Romania a year ago. She visited prisons in places like Craiova — "terrible places, but I saw one of the liveliest churches in Romania within prison walls," she says.

Her ministry to street people also brings Renate in contact with Satanist groups. There is a Satanist "church" in the neighborhood, and its members place curses on the Anglican church and other Christian organizations all the time. They also attempted to desecrate the church where Renate lived, stalked her and slashed her car tires.

"We live on the devil's doorstep," says Renate. "That's not a figment of our imagination. The command to watch and pray takes on new meaning in such circumstances."

Satan is real

Satan's powers can be directed by individuals but is also structural, she says. She sees the Red Light area as "a place of embodied exploitation and injustice," which brings in high revenues for the city of Amsterdam, as well as for pimps and drug dealers.

Many people have wondered why Renate was never afraid in these surroundings. She attributes that to the grace of God and to the knowledge that Satan is only the prince of the air — smelly air, at that. "The fact that we have a God who longs to save becomes the reality you witness when you see people healed, their lives transformed and speaking out boldly in what we would regard impossible situations," she says with a smile.

Reflecting on the power of Satan, Renate thinks that being a Christian family in a pluralist culture is very difficult. She is appalled at how religion in Canada is being gagged by the media. In fact, she finds that shocking compared to Holland.

Canada's mission field

"There is a really strong evangelical movement in Holland that's becoming relevant to the culture," she remarks. "And religion can be openly discussed. I find Canada more needy, and certainly as much of a mission field as Holland is."

Renate heard from Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship that with 50,000 students in Toronto, only 500 openly declare themselves to be Christian. "People are ashamed of Christianity," she notes.

What comes next for Renate Kok? She has no plans other than to wait for confirmation from God. It will be some kind of special ministry, perhaps to prostitutes, drug addicts or prisoners, who knows? And whether her ministry will take place in Canada, England or the Netherlands, will depend on the call of the Spirit. She is open to surprises.

Feature

How I was delivered from three years of Word-Faith teachings

Wealth: name it and claim it

Nannette Serra

When I think of my involvement in Word-Faith, certain childhood memories spring to mind. I remember my half-sister's "holy roller" friend and how that family lost two teenage boys. One died of leukemia shortly after confessing he had been healed at an Oral Roberts meeting. My mom was a nurse's aide and an atheist, so her observation of this boy's death bears repeating. "I never saw anyone die so peacefully," she told me.

I remember riding to a country church with my mom, dad and Dennis. This church had an overflowing well in the front yard. I remember drinking the cool, sweet water and pondering the meaning of a sign above the well:

Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again. But he who drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst again. The water that I shall give him shall be in him as a well of living water springing up to life eternal.

I know people who were put under condemnation because a spouse had died of cancer, a brother never came out of a coma, a woman was never healed of diabetes. They were told these things happened because they didn't have enough faith.

I remember my brother, Dennis. Dennis was born crippled and lived nine painful years. What I remember is our wishful thinking. Every day we tried to will him to walk and talk. But our wishful thinking didn't change anything. On Nov. 9, 1953, Dennis died.

Looking back, I can see my mom's reasons for becoming an atheist were the same reasons I accepted the teachings of Word-Faith. It was the basic belief that a loving God doesn't want us to suffer. My Mom handled my brother's cerebral palsy by concluding there was no God. I said I would believe if I was given sufficient proof. I became a "religious" agnostic. I attended church and was baptized.

Set straight by a Reformed Baptist

In 1968, after moving to Port Washington, N.Y., I was born again. My neighbor visited me thinking all Southern Baptists were saved. She happened to make a horrendous statement. She said, "God's will *will be done*." This was at odds with my Baptist training. I became angry and quickly ushered her out of my house. My exact thought was: "I have a free will. God can't do anything unless I let him." After she left, I had my first spiritual experience. Paul on the road to Damascus could not have been more surprised, and definitely not as angry.

I entered First Baptist Church and began five years of Reformed Bible training. I had an excellent teacher, Bill Hampton, who is now pastor in Shiloh, Pa. Of the many things I learned, at least six are pertinent to my deliverance from Word-Faith.

1. Christianity is both a biblical and experiential religion.

2. Every experience must be judged by the Word of God.

3. Every spirit must be tested, and any spirit that preaches anything apart from the Word must be rejected.

4. Every Christian is responsible to discern between the "voice" of the Shepherd and the voices of the world, our own flesh and the devil.

5. We must *never deliberately* seek a spiritual experience.

6. We must not be so proud as to think we Christians can't be deceived.

In 1981, on Nov. 9, (co-incidentally the same day Dennis had died) my father died. It was right at the time when the Holy Spirit had wrestled me to the ground and delivered me from three years of Word-Faith teachings. No amount of positive confessions or claiming of scriptural "promises" could keep my father from dying at his appointed hour. To Word-Faith people, that will sound fatalistic but, when I accepted God's will in this matter, I returned again to the "peace that passes understanding."

Ask crucial questions

I got into Word-Faith in a Sunday school class where we were studying a book by Kenneth Copeland. I did one better and took a correspondence course written by the father of Word-Faith, E.W. Kenyon himself. It wasn't until I had gotten out of this teaching that I began to hear Copeland refer to himself as a god.

I've learned I need to ask questions about who teachers are talking about when they say "Jesus." I recently discovered Word-Faith teaches Jesus had to become a sinner and go to hell where he fought with the devil, won and was "born again."

Had I heard these teachings at the beginning of my Word-Faith trip, I hope I wouldn't have been so easily deceived. I know Jesus is the sinless Son of God and it is only because he *is* sinless that he was able to provide the perfect sacrifice for us.

When I attempted practising Word-Faith, the Holy Spirit began a war inside of me. The Spirit wars with the flesh and the two can never be reconciled. The Word-Faith error that got me into bondage was the substituting of the "flesh" for the "spirit."

Word-Faith said I could have the "desires of my heart" if I would follow a certain formula: i.e., find an appropriate verse of Scripture and "claim" it; give a positive confession telling others what God was going to do for me on the basis of this "promise"; stand firm in "faith" despite any symptoms the devil might put on me.

The "desires of my heart" were interpreted as just about anything my *flesh* desired. The root of this error appeared to be the same problem my mom had with my brother. I was told God wants me to have the desires of my heart — an "abundant life" free of pain and tribulation. But if I don't have enough "faith," if I give in to the "symptoms" or if I let my guard down for one second..., then I'll get my just desserts.

In times of trouble, I couldn't come to my Word-Faith family because they condemned me. If I was chronically sick and I was honest enough to admit it, they anxiously warned, "Don't claim that sickness." They made it sound like I went to God in prayer and said, "I claim this sickness. Please don't heal me."

I know people who were put under condemnation because a spouse died of cancer, a brother never came out of a coma, a woman was never healed of diabetes. They were told these things happened because they didn't have enough faith.

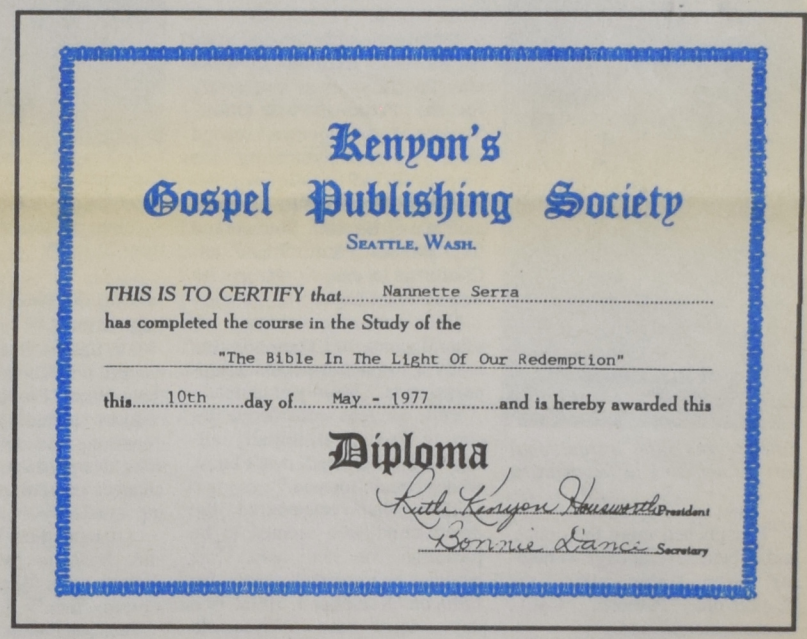
And, of course, we got angry at God. His love was attached to giving us the "desires of our hearts." When we didn't get what we wanted, we concluded that God must not love us!

'No rest till I rest in thee'

I was tempted to doubt my salvation. Word-Faith teaches that healing is provided in the atonement and can be received in the same way we receive redemption. If we find we don't have enough faith to obtain a simple healing then it is logical to conclude we don't have enough faith to "claim" our salvation.

By confusing the desires of the flesh and the desires of the spirit, Word-Faith left me in a black depression. Even when I persevered and got what I wanted, I felt empty. I was like the Israelites to whom God granted their requests but sent leanness to their souls. It is truism that we can never be rich enough, slim enough or famous enough.

Flesh even desires psychic experiences. "You're thirsty. Come and drink," the false teacher says. But he never tells us it is our flesh that is thirsting after temporal things. Our spirit does not thirst after mind-altering experiences any more than it thirsts after mind-altering drugs.



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The false teacher tells us we are "thirsting after righteousness" when what he is actually dispensing is psychic experiences. Our thirst after righteousness was filled when we accepted Jesus as our Savior. He is our Righteousness. Childhood memories of the sign by the overflowing well remind me that if I drink the temporal waters of Word-Faith heresy, I *will* thirst again. My flesh — that old nature — will always thirst after more of this world. But I have come to the well of Living Water and he has said that those who come to him shall *never* thirst again.

Nannette Serra lives in St. Louis, Miss.

Feature

The power of purpose

Sheri Benedict

Try as she might, Edie Stevens couldn't shake the image from the dream which began shortly after the death of her husband, Glen, in May 1992.

By day "I was just sort of at loose ends," she said softly.

But when she closed her eyes at night, she saw the child — a light brown-skinned boy, arms outstretched, walking toward her.

COURTESY SHERI BENEDICT

Edie Stevens dons a traditional sari for her work in Trivandrum.

"It happened more than once, and I spent several days wondering, 'Who is this child?'" the 68-year-old Pomona, Calif., woman remembered.

She found her answer last fall, in a telephone call from a former employer, REAP director Billy Teninty.

"He asked if I would be interested in going to India to help out with some typing lessons," the retired secretary recalled.

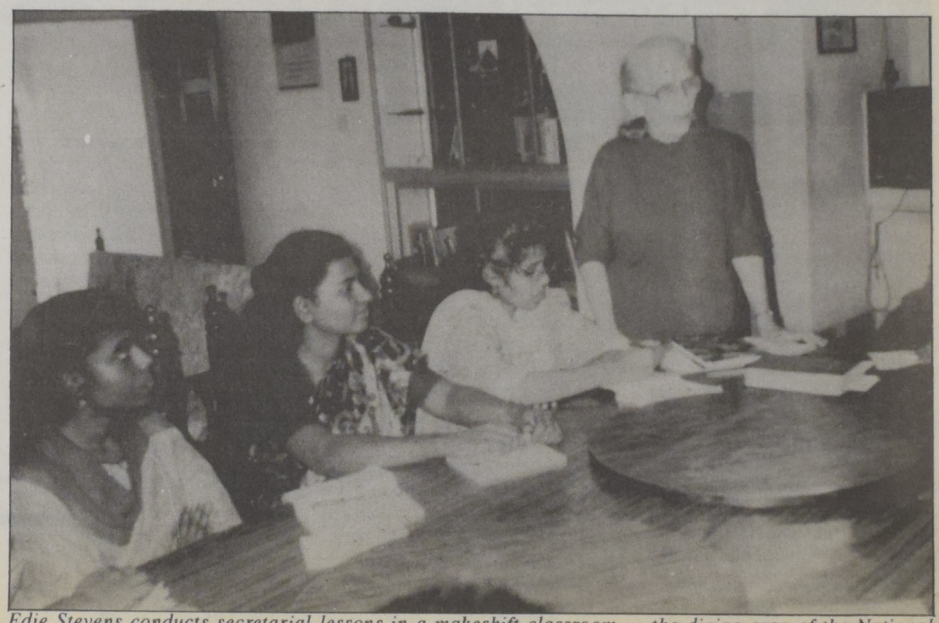
Officials at National Christian Services (NCS)/Ability Aids International had asked REAP — the medical equipment and training division of the Spring Lake, Mich.,-based Christian relief agency International Aid Inc. — to secure someone to teach secretarial skills to young women at a vocational school for the physically, mentally and financially disadvantaged people of Trivandrum in southern India.

Teninty thought immediately of Stevens. Retiring in 1988 after 26 1/2 years as a secretary for the Pomona Post Office, Stevens had begun a second career, first volunteering her time in REAP's California offices, then becoming a paid member of its staff. She worked for the agency until REAP left California in 1993 to merge with International Aid.

"Edie was my secretary for several years, so I knew she was really a top-notch personal support person," Teninty explained.

Still, Stevens considered declining his request, initially telling NCS officials, "I don't know what I can do for you."

Then she remembered the dream-child who seemed to be pleading for her help. She relented and boarded a plane for India on December 1, 1995. Two days later, the 67-year-old retiree took charge of her class



Edie Stevens conducts secretarial lessons in a makeshift classroom — the dining area of the National Christian Services building.

— eight women ranging in age from 21 to 25.

Going through a lot together

For nearly five months, she worked with the group, teaching them proper English, office procedures including typing and dictation, and more basic lessons designed to increase their chances of getting — and keeping — a job.

"I taught them about hygiene and how to wash clothes," Stevens said. "We went through a lot together."

The job wasn't without its challenges. A dining room served as Stevens' "classroom"; its table, as her students' desks.

Adequate training equipment was scarce. With the exception of one electric typewriter, manuals "older than the ones I learned on when I was a kid" proved to be the only machines available, Stevens said.

"Three or four times a day, the power went off, so I spent a lot of time resetting the electric," she recalled, "and I hadn't typed on a manual typewriter in so long that at first I had trouble doing it."

And though the desert sands, palm trees and sun-brightened skies made Trivandrum itself seem a tropical paradise, Stevens soon learned otherwise. She and her associates at the NCS facility were often cursed for bringing their Christian faith into a predominantly Hindu neighborhood.

Yet she persevered, incorporating thrice-daily devotionals and Bible study sessions into her lesson plans at NCS and, in her spare time, teaching Bible stories to local children with the help of an interpreter.

Though her adult pupils had read English versions of the Bible, "they didn't have the foggiest idea what it meant," Stevens said. "They say they are Christians, yet they have a long way to go. A lot of superstition is carried over from the Hindu religion. I had a chance to witness to them. It was just a very unique, beautiful experience. The Lord was so close to me."

Doubts put to rest

There were times early on in her stay when she wondered if she had made a mistake in accepting the invitation to teach in Trivandrum: she was 67 years old, and the heat was taking its toll on her health. Before it was over "I had lost quite a bit of weight," she said.

But her doubts were soon put to rest.

By the time she returned to the United States on April 24, 1995, one of her students had already landed a secretarial position; others were interviewing.

A year later, many were still writing to her, thanking her time and again for her efforts on their behalf. Their affection for the woman who travelled so far to teach them skills they could use to succeed is obvious: "To our sweet 'auntie'...," their letters begin.

"I don't think I'm ever going to retire," Stevens says now. "I'm just going to play it by ear. I would do it again; if they just said, 'Edie, we need you,' I would be there, because it was a wonderful experience and God saw me through it. It just deepened my Christian experience. It gave me the chance to trust the Lord to see me through all these things. There were times when I didn't know what I was doing, but I felt this perfect peace that is only to be had when you are walking where he wants you to be."

A former newspaper reporter and member of the communications department staff at International Aid Inc., Sheri Benedict is now a freelance writer living in Portage, Mich., with her husband and three children. Providing food, health and hope to the needy around the world and in the U.S., International Aid gave emergency relief, missionary assistance and medical aid valued just under $45 million to over 160 countries in 1996.

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On the job with Henriëtte Thompson

Name: *Henriëtte Thompson*
Job: *Manager, development education*
Employer: *World Vision*
Location: *Mississauga, Ont.*
Age: *Thirty-something*

Some years ago, when Henriëtte Thompson stepped into the office of her bank manager to discuss the global debt crisis and its crippling impact on the poor, she was in for a surprise. The bank manager didn't have a clue about international debt management and the major-domo at the Royal Bank or other branches of Canada's financial institutions in Georgetown, Ont., wasn't much more enlightened.

But after years of grassroots activism, local ignorance couldn't stop Thompson from trying to make a difference. Eventually, branch managers referred Thompson and other members of her church group to higher-ups to discuss how crushing debt payments to the wealthy North unjustly drain the financially strapped economies in the world's southern hemisphere.

And that's just one of the issues to which Thompson dedicated her volunteer energy for some 15 years. She also raised her children and earned a bachelor's degree from York University, Toronto. Now the manager of development education at World Vision Canada, Thompson says it took years for her to awaken to global justice issues.

"You learn to link the global with the local," says Thompson, who grew up in the Christian Reformed Church of Georgetown. After she married an Anglican, she joined that denomination. Thompson, her musician husband and the couple's three school-aged children now attend St. George's Anglican Church in Georgetown. She has been a board member for Citizens for Public Justice (Toronto) for the past three years.

COURTESY HENRIETTE THOMPSON

Henriëtte Thompson

Thompson says she has always been interested in people from different cultures to help her see the world through different lenses, but she didn't become deeply involved in global issues until her pastor at the time invited her to join what was then known as "Ten Days for World Development." "Ten Days" is an ecumenical and national network of activist groups which attracts members from the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican, United and Lutheran churches.

After some years of volunteering for "Ten Days," Thompson stepped up her involvement when she started co-ordinating the Georgetown meetings. The group organized local awareness campaigns on issues such as the root causes of hunger, women in the Third World, debt issues and the like. One thing led to another and after numerous years of volunteer efforts, Thompson initiated a Georgetown-based refugee resettlement group which sponsored five families in about five years while also lobbying politicians, urging them to improve settlement processes.

"'Ten Days' was a big part of my life for 15 years," says the passionate and high-energy Thompson. She continues to be connected to the local group but is less involved since starting her full-time paid job at World Vision about three years ago. World Vision is an international Christian organization which focusses on the well-being of poor children in 100 countries.

Thompson oversees two other staff persons in her department at World Vision's Canadian headquarters near Toronto. Her team is responsible for producing educational resources — print and audio-visual materials — which are directly connected to World Vision's work. (Thompson, who holds a diploma in radio broadcast from Humber College, worked for a private radio station in British Columbia for three years before quitting her job, moving back to Ontario, and starting her family in the late 1970s.)

Thompson presents talks at schools, churches, conferences or to the general public. The books, videos, pamphlets and curriculum materials her team produces deal with a wide variety of issues, including hunger and poverty, peace and conflict, gender issues and others.

Thompson says she loves her work. "If I had to write a job description for the perfect job, this would be it," she says about her position.

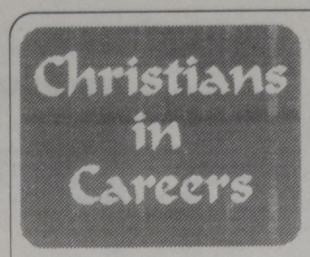
God is so big

"I've come to a better understanding of how big our God really is. Our God is large enough to listen to staff prayers for harassed and hungry refugees in a Rwandan jungle, yet God will also listen to the same personnel praying for a Canadian donor who just lost a job. Through staff devotions and chapels, Thompson says she had also come to respect the great diversity of hues within Canadian Christianity.

And what issue is closest to Thompson's own heart these days? "Children of war," she says without hesitation. Kids are conscripted into war in regional wars around the globe, and it's changing the way adults fight.

Thompson says these kid soldiers, some just 10 years old, lack the moral, emotional or physical strength to understand traditional "rules of war" which, for example, protect unarmed civilians from attack. Many very lethal weapons are now light and sophisticated enough for a young child to carry around and use. World Vision is lobbying the Canadian federal government to stop the sale of arms to countries that openly conscript children.

Teachers or readers who wish to order some of the resources prepared by Thompson's department can call World Vision at (905) 821-3033, ext. 382 (outside the Toronto area call 1-800-268-1650).



Nandy Heule

Nandy Heule is a writer and editor based in Brampton, Ont., and regularly writes letters on behalf of political prisoners identified by Amnesty International. She would like to interview a Christian scientist or women working in the computer industry. If you or anybody you know would like to be interviewed for this column, please phone her at (905) 451-8916.

Campaign to ban landmines at a crossroads

Titus Peachey

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) effort to remove unexploded cluster bombs from Laotian villages makes Mennonites likely supporters of the current international campaign to ban landmines. Both landmines and unexploded cluster weapons cause injury and death long after wars end.

Now the international campaign to ban landmines is currently at a crossroads. The U.S. and Canadian governments are taking strikingly different approaches. Christians on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border are uniquely positioned to help determine the outcome.

The U.S. recently announced a permanent ban on anti-personnel landmine exports, but has consistently refused to set a timetable for the elimination of landmines from its arsenal. Instead, it is working within the framework of the UN Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a treaty. This process includes Russia and China, two countries opposed to any real limitation on the production and use of landmines. The result will likely be a long, protracted time of negotiation.

Canada has already declared its own ban on anti-personnel landmines, and has destroyed its existing stockpile. Canada has also initiated an international process to sign a treaty by the end of December that would ban landmines.

This initiative is gaining significant momentum. Mozambique and South Africa recently announced unilateral bans on landmines. Observers expect the December Ottawa conference to welcome participants from more than 70 nations, building strong moral suasion for a ban.

U.S. citizens can help the campaign by urging their senators, representatives and president to join the Ottawa initiative, and to declare a specific end to landmine use.

Canadian citizens can write letters of support for Canada's initiative to Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Canadians can also send letters to the U.S. embassy in Ottawa, urging U.S. support for the Canadian initiative. The address is Mr. Thomas Weston, Acting U.S. Ambassador to Canada, U.S. Embassy, 100 Wellington Street, Ottawa, ON K1P 5T1.

'Not essential'

There is growing debate within militaries themselves about the usefulness of landmines. A *New York Times* ad signed by retired U.S. military officers states: "Given the wide range of weaponry available to military forces today, antipersonnel landmines are not essential...."

In 1997 the U.S. will spend $1.3 billion to research, test and produce new cluster weapons and their launching systems. This averages $3.5 million (US) per day (three times the $1.1 million MCC provided to the Laos bomb removal project from 1994 to 1996).

MCC's experience in Laos has heightened our awareness of weapons that kill indiscriminately, both during and after wars. The campaign to ban landmines provides a practical opportunity to help bring an end to one specific worldwide tragedy.

More information, and sample letters supporting the Ottawa initiative, can be obtained from MCC U.S., 21 S. 12th St., Box 500, Akron, PA 17501; phone (717) 859-3889; e-mail: tmp @mccus.org; and from the MCC Canada Ottawa office, 803-63 Sparks St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5A6; phone (613) 238-7224, e-mail: mccott @web.net

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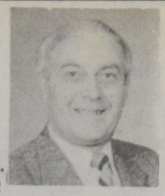

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Advice

Pray without ceasing...

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear Readers:

You may remember our January 3 column which dealt with a mother devastated by her adult children's sinful lifestyle, despite their Christian upbringing and education. We advised her to give her children and her anger over to God. We also said that she did not need to constantly challenge them; instead, she needed only to love them and pray for them. Period.

That advice drew some reader response, especially from a "parent in pain" who felt that we should always continue to speak to our children about their choices (CC, April 11). This reader invited the original letter writer to get in touch with her.

Now two others have also written us about our advice. We invite you to read what they wrote. The first letter came from a woman, age 85, and was written in Dutch. The second came from an older couple and contained a Dutch poem written by a Ds. H. Postma. We hope our translation did the letter and the poem justice.

You'll notice that both writers emphasize the importance of prayer. We wholeheartedly say "Amen!" to their emphasis.

Dear P & M:

My eye fell on the letter written to both of you by a sorrowful mother. Parents are deeply burdened when their children drift away from God's Word and follow sinful ways. The woman who wrote doesn't know what to do with her pain and seems to express it by being angry at her children. She also feels that the Christian school tuition was totally wasted.

Her situation reminds me of Jacob — how he suffered when his sons told him that Joseph had been torn apart by a wild animal. If only he had believed Joseph's dreams! If only he had not ridiculed God's Word as it came through those dreams. Much later, when he heard that Joseph was alive, Jacob realized after all that Joseph's dreams were from God. Then, and only then, was his heart at peace. At last he could say, "Now I can die."

Notice that Jacob's suffering was not in vain. His sons were deeply affected by their father's pain. In fact, because of his suffering their hearts were radically changed.

We may take our suffering to the Lord daily. He tilts his ear towards us and answers us according to his good will. Sometimes, his answers to our prayers for our children do not come until we, the parents, have passed away. Even Eli acknowledged God's sovereign will when he was told about the deaths of his godless sons. On hearing the tragic news he said, "He is the Lord; He does what is good in his own eyes." I encourage all of us, as well as this grieving mother, to pray daily for this kind of trust.

Dear P & M:

We were struck by the fact that your answer hardly mentioned prayer. Yet the most important thing we can do for anyone is pray. We are to pray not only for our children and grandchildren, but for many other people as well. We are to pray in faith as the Holy Spirit directs. Many Bible passages link God's promises to our prayers and give us the incentive to pray with confidence and trust (cf. Acts 16:31; I Tim. 2:4; II Peter 3:9; John 15:7; I John 5:14-15; I Thess. 5:16-18; Isa. 49:24-25; 59:21).

We have enclosed the booklet "How To Pray For the Lost." If this burdened parent writes you back, please be kind enough to pass it on to her. We have also enclosed a Dutch poem for her in the hope that she can read it.

Why can't you fall asleep tonight?
You brought your cares to God.
Or did you take them back again,
Now plagued with anxious thought?

You do not have to wrestle with
the load that you just left.
Don't think that God's too overwhelmed
to hear your heart's request.

The Lord will not stand idly by
and let one child be lost.
He'll find the lamb that leaves its stall
No matter what the cost.

Why don't you bring your sorrows to
the One who's good and just.
Then fall into the restful sleep
that comes to those who trust.

Ds. H. Postma
(translated by Peter & Marja Slofstra)

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Loved, not adopted

KEN HEYMAN

She did not conceive me,
Her body did not bear me,
But her love has shown me
All the things I can be.

No blood of hers flows through my veins,
No DNA to trace,
But to know that I belong
That fact always remains.

by Gayle Gilmore
Chesapeake, Va.

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Obituaries $45.00
Notes of thanks $35.00
Birthdays $40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

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a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

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We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

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Anniversaries

1957 May 24 1997

It is with great joy and thankfulness to the Lord that we can celebrate the 40th anniversary of our parents

ALBERT and ELISABETH DEROO

Congratulations!
From your children and grandchildren:
Petra Talsma — Richmond Hill, Ont.
Sarah
Pauline & Wally Bishop — Richmond Hill, Ont.
Brooke, Erik, Robyn, Kyle
Paul & Cindy Deroo — Oshawa, Ont.
Cheryl, Andrew, Jennifer, Lindsay
Marianne Pappas — Aurora, Ont.
Michelle, Tyler
Janet & Peter Kingma — Byron Center, Mich.
Stephanie, Alex, Chantelle, Mitchell
Richard Deroo
Home address: 14 Leah Cres., Thornhill, ON L4J 8C3

Sexbierum Orkney
the Neth. Ont.

1947 May 22 1997

We rejoice and give thanks to the Lord as our parents and grandparents celebrate their 50th anniversary

HARRY and EDITH DEJONG (nee KLAVER)

The Lord has blessed you with 50 years of marriage and also with 50 years of health and happiness in Canada. May the Lord continue to be your guide in the years to come, as you both have given us your love and support through the years.
Happy 75th birthday, Mom and Beppe!
With love from your children and grandchildren:
Tess & Wayne Kiers — Victoria, B.C.
Rachel, Michael
Louis & Faye DeJong — Troy, Ont.
Harry, Faye, Daniel, Emily
Dirk & Cora DeJong — Freelton, Ont.
David, Shawn, Carrie, Kara, Laura
Rita & Ray Berg — Gorrie, Ont.
Brandon, Aaron, Jan Houston, Haddasah, Eden, Abigial
Frank & Hilda DeJong — Binbrook, Ont.
Frank, John, Danielle, Hailey
Open house on Saturday, May 24, 1997, from 2-4 p.m., at Ancaster Chr. Ref. Church, 70-Hwy. 53 East, Ancaster, Ont.
Your presence is your gift to us.
Home address: R.R. #1, Lynden, ON L0R 1T0

Take action!
Place an ad in our
Business Directory.

Anniversaries

1957 May 31 1997

With thanksgiving to God we hope to celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

BERT and JENNIE WAGENAAR (nee DE HAAN)

May the Lord continue to bless and keep you in His loving care.
With love and best wishes from your children and grandchildren,
John & Margot Wagenaar — Wyoming, Ont.
Melissa, Janelle, Lynnae, Jonathan, Matthew
Nancy & Conrad Kaptein — Auburn, Ont.
Nicole, Meghann, Erica, Jacklyn
Jim & Doreen Wagenaar — Sarnia, Ont.
Open house to be held, D.V., on Saturday, May 31, 1997, from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at the Redeemer Chr. Ref. Church, 5834 Blackwell Sideroad, Sarnia, Ont.
Best wishes only please.
Address: 4839 Brigden Road, Sarnia, ON N7T 7H3

1957 May 17 1997
Hamilton

"Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again rejoice" (Phil.4:4).
With thankfulness to God, we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary with our parents and grandparents

SIMON and CHRISTINA SCHOTSMAN (nee SCHARRINGA)

We, as children and grandchildren, give thanks to the Lord for blessing Dad and Mom, Opa and Oma, these past 40 years. We pray that the Lord will continue to be with you and uphold you in the years to come.
An open house will be held in their honor on May 31, 1997, from 3:00 until 5:00 p.m. at the Hamilton District Chr. High School.
Best wishes only, please.
Love from:
Rick & Shirley
Matthew, Thomas, Ryan
Chris & Sharon
Chloe, Sarah, Colette
Sylvia & David
Hannah, Emma
Eric & Angela
Home address: 498 Glancaster Rd., Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0

Teachers

OAKVILLE, Ont.: Oakville Chr. School (JK-8), interviewing **teachers with majors in English, science, primary specialist, computer skill, French.** Resume with references to:

B. Mitchell, Principal
112 Third Line
Oakville, ON L6L 3Z6
Phone: (905) 825-1247
Fax: (905) 825-3398

Births

KIKKERT-VEENHOF:

Praising God for the wonder and joy of creation, Henry and Heather give thanks for the precious gift of

REUBEN KENDRICK

born April 17, 1997, 7 lbs., 10 ozs. Little brother for Julie, Timothy, Michelle, Daniel and Hannah. 32nd grandchild for Mrs. Lammie Kikkert, and 24th for William and Dorothy Veenhof.
Dear Reuben: "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you... plans to give you a hope and a future!" (Jer. 29:11).
Home address: R.R. #1, Grassie, ON L0R 1M0

Teachers

LONDON, Ont.: London District Chr. Secondary School invites applications for a combination **geography/English position** (probably part-time) for the 1997-98 school year. Please send your letter of application, statement of faith and resume to:

Mr. H. Kooy, Principal
London District Chr. Secondary School
24 Braesyde Avenue
London, ON N5W 1V3
Phone: (519) 455-4360
Fax: (519) 455-4364

SMITHVILLE, Ont.: Smithville Covenant Chr. School invites applications for a **part-time, or possible full-time position in a Grade 6/7 class or Grade 7/8 class.** Applicants should have the ability to provide leadership in music and have a keen interest in sports. Applications should include a resume, perspective of Christian education, and references sent to:

Mr. M. Elzinga
Smithville Covenant Chr. School
6470 Regional Rd. #14
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

TRENTON, Ont.: Trenton Chr. School invites applications from qualified teachers for a **50% French teaching position** (K-8) effective September 1997. Please send letter of application, resumes, inquiries, etc., to:

Ike Witteveen, Principal
Trenton Chr. School
20 Fourth Ave., Trenton, ON K8V 5N3
Phone: (613) 392-3600
Fax: (613) 392-6316

For Sale

For sale:
Blue Psalter Hymnals,
Hebron Chr. Ref. Church, Whitby, Ont.
Call (905) 430-5141.

Anniversaries

1957 May 17 1997

"What then shall we say in response to this? If God is for us who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).
With thankfulness to God, we hope to celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

TEUNIS and JACOBA VINK (KLEYWEGT)

We pray that God may continue to care for them and bless them and us. With all our love and best wishes we congratulate you.
John & Joanne Vink — St. Catharines, Ont.
Brenda, Cheryl
Trish & Gene Horz — Edmonton, Alta.
Ed & Cora Vink — St. Catharines, Ont.
Gillian, Jessica, Peter, James, Trisha
Friends are invited to celebrate by coming to an open house on Friday, May 16, 1997, at Covenant Chr. Ref. Church, St. Catharines, Ont., from 7-9 p.m.
Address: 94 Monarch Park Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2M 6V3

Teachers

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE, Alta.: Rocky Chr. School is an interdenominational society school of about 150 students in ECS to Grade 9. We are accepting applications from committed Christian teachers for a **Grade 2/3 position.** This is a 0.6 allotment with the possibility of increased time dependent on enrolment. A half-time teacher assistant is assigned to this room. **Music or Special Education would be an asset.** Application closing date is May 17, 1997. Please send resume, including Personal Testimony and Philosophy of Christian Education to:

Ben Bergen, Principal
Rocky Christian School
5204-54 Avenue
Rocky Mountain House, AB
T0M 1T3
Phone: (403) 845-3516
Fax: (403) 845-4370

LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School, serving 377 students in K-9, located in central Alberta, invites applications from qualified teachers for the 1997-98 school year. Three definite openings are:

1) Jr. High Math/Science;
2) Jr. High Physical Education/Language Arts and/or Social Studies;
3) Grade 4-9 French/other teaching duties.

Possible elementary openings may occur. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Please send resume and letter of application to:

John Piers, Principal
Lacombe Chr. School
5206 - 58 Street
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9
Phone: (403) 782-6531
Fax: (403) 782-5760

Classifieds

Miscellaneous	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous

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SEEKING A PASTOR

Hope Chr. Ref. Church in Port Perry, Ont., is now seeking a pastor. Located on the shores of Lake Scugog, Port Perry is a small town, 20 min. north of Oshawa.

We are a caring congregation of 69 families, consisting mainly of families with school-age children and supporting local Christian elementary and secondary schools.

We seek a pastor who can encourage spiritual growth of both young and old, sharing his love for the Lord through enthusiastic and stimulating messages that can motivate our youth and encourage our members.

If you demonstrate strong leadership and direction-setting skills, specialize in strengthening teen-youth ministry, and can tap into unused gifts and talents for God's service, please send your inquiry or profile to **John Lunshof, Hope CRC, Search Committee, P.O. Box 1169, Port Perry, ON L9L 1A9.**

MINISTRY DEVELOPER

The **Clarkson Chr. Ref. Church in Mississauga, Ont.**, has an opening on its pastoral staff for an enthusiastic and qualified **Ministry Developer** to equip its members for outreach; to ensure an effective ministry to youth and young adults; and to enhance the congregation's spiritual life and social interaction. For more information write to:

Clarkson Chr. Ref. Church
1880 Lakeshore Road W., Mississauga, ON L5J 1J7
Fax: (905) 823-5841. Attention: Search Committee

Miscellaneous

ATTENTION

Receiving your C.C. issues irregularly?

We would like to let you know that we are aware of the inconsistent arrival of our paper in many parts of Canada. We're keeping track of all complaints and will (again) bring this to the attention of Canada Post. We're doing the best we can. *Christian Courier* is mailed from our office *every Tuesday* without fail. The entire load is then picked up by a carrier and delivered to Canada Post.

All large second class mailings, like *Christian Courier,* receive no local treatment but are shipped directly to a central clearing point. All this is designed to cut costs, promote efficiency, etc., etc. This kind of "streamlining" is going on all over the country.

We ask our readers to be patient. Let's hope that the problems that occur will soon disappear.

Stan de Jong
Manager

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*P.S.: CC subscription and advertising payments are not tax deductible. Only amounts of $10 or over clearly designated to **Reformed Faith Witness** will be officially receipted.*

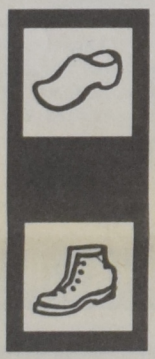
Classifieds

Thank You

Thanks be to God!

With thanksgiving to God, the congregation of ***Grace Chr. Ref. Church of Welland, Ont.****, celebrates 35 years of ministry. Over the years the Lord has provided all our needs in blessing us with pastors, office bearers and other leaders who have guided us in our Christian ministry. We are especially thankful for the 35 years of service* ***Diny van den Boogaard*** *has given to our congregation as our church typist. As a congregation we have always benefited from Diny's work in producing countless bulletins, programs, and other documents. May God continue to be praised through our worship and service.*

Events



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4-Day Evening Walk Committee
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for free pamphlet and more information.

Events

Events

Open house and opening celebrations

The congregation of the **Exeter Chr. Ref. Church** warmly invites you to share in their rejoicing of the opening of a new place of worship. **Open house: Saturday, May 24, 1997, 1-4 p.m.**, including tours, ribbon cutting, etc. **Sunday, May 25, 1997, Inspirational worship service** followed by a potluck luncheon. Everyone welcome. For more information call the **Exeter Chr. Ref. Church** at **(519) 235-2990** or correspondence may be sent to **Exeter Chr. Ref. Church, 332 Huron St. W., Exeter, ON N0M 1S2.**

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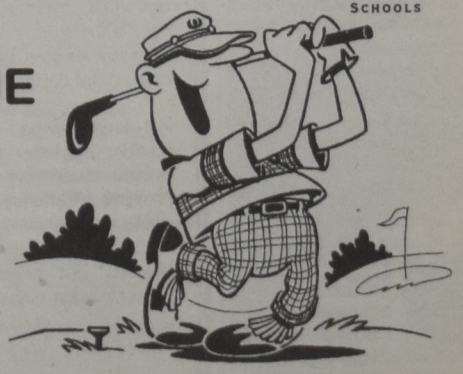

REGISTER NOW!

For more information contact:

Adrian Guldemond @ OACS (905) 648-2100
Hans Vander Stoep @ CCBF (905) 522-8602
Janice VanAndel, Administrator (905) 648-3503

Summer Job Market

Attention: All Students

We know that many of you are thinking about summer jobs at this time. As in previous years *Christian Courier* will carry the **Summer Job Market** section in the Classifieds. We urge you to check this section until **May 23.**

Send us your announcement now and include name, age, address, phone number, experience and the type of work you are seeking. Be as brief as possible! Please note:

1) We will run your ad in up to four (4) issues of *Christian Courier.*

2) Please cancel the ad as soon as you have found employment so that you don't use up valuable space needlessly.

3) **Due to tough economic times, we are compelled to begin charging a small fee for the space used. We suggest you send us a cheque for $5 x the number of weeks you wish us to run the ad (maximum $20, GST incl.).**

Good job hunting!
Stan de Jong
Manager

Attention: Employers

This summer why not hire a student to help ease your workload and get some extra things done? This spring, students will advertise their skills in our Summer Job Market section of the Classifieds. Please consider hiring one of them.

Some students may be hired when you call them. Please be patient. Sometimes they are hired before we can cancel their ad.

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

May 10 Trenton Chr. School's 40th anniversary dinners, 6:30 p.m., Creekside Hall, **Brighton,** Ont. Tickets and Info.: (613) 392-3600 (#).

May 10 Calvin Chr. School of Dundas hosts the ninth annual Dundas Community Springfest, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Community Centre, King & Market, **Dundas,** Ont. A fun day for the entire family. Admission is free. Info.: (905) 627-9173.

May 10-17 Concerts by Liberation Choir, conducted by Willem van Suydam. Participants: Christopher Dawes, Martin Mans and Colleen Greidanus. May 10: 8 p.m., Central Presb.Church, **Hamilton,** Ont.; May 16: 7:30 p.m., St.Andrew's Presb.Church, **Belleville,** Ont.; May 17: "Friendship Windmill Benefit Concert," 7:30 p.m., Christ Church Cathedral, **Ottawa,** Ont. Info./tickets: (905) 631-1929.(#)

May 11 Grace CRC, **Welland,** Ont. celebrates its 35th anniversary. Former members are invited to attend for worship and fellowship. Info.: (905) 732-9942. (#)

May 14 Organ concert by Jonathan Oldengarm, 12 noon, St. Andrew's Presb. Church, **Kitchener,** Ont. Info.: (519) 725-9514.

May 14 Convention - 1997, Can.Federation of Chr.Ref. Women, 10 a.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Theme: "Renewed in Christ." Tickets/info.: (905) 945-5335.

May 16-18 Reformed Engaged Encounter weekend, for couples contemplating engagement or marriage. At Pearce Williams Conference Grounds, **Iona Station,** Ont. Registration/info.: Fred & Doreen Breukelman, (905) 957-4894. (#)

May 21-23 "Trust & Suspicion? - Hermeneutics in a Broken World," a conference hosted by ICS, **Toronto**, Ont. Keynote speakers: James Olthuis, Walter Brueggemann, Phillis Trible and Sylvia Keesmaat. For scholars, teachers, pastors and anyone concerned about how the Bible speaks to the brokenness in our culture. Info.: (416) 979-2331 (#)

May 22-23 "Holland/Canada" piano and organ concerts by Martin Mans and Willem Van Suydam. Both events start at 8 p.m. **May 22:** Covenant CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont.; **May 23:** Owen Sound Can. Ref. Church, **Owen Sound**, Ont. Admission free! Info.: (905) 631-1929.

May 25 Worship service featuring a performance of the O.T. "Song of Songs," 6 p.m., Clarkson CRC, 1880 Lakeshore Rd. W., **Mississauga**, Ont. Introduction by Dr. Calvin Seerveld. Info.: (905) 823-7262.

May 29 Organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, 12 noon, St. Paul's Anglican Church (Bloor & Jarvis), **Toronto**, Ont. Info.: (519) 725-9514.

May 30-31 "Business '97," a conference sponsored by Calvin College and Partners for Chr. Development, Calvin College campus, **Grand Rapids**, Mich. Speakers include: Richard Mouw, Tim Hoeksema, Gaylen Byker, Ray Vanderlaan and others. Registration/Info.: (616) 957-6600 (#).

May 30-June 1 Christian Singles and Singles Again Spring '97 Retreat, Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Theme: "Faithful Companionship with Christ." Brochure/info.: (905) 387-1628 after 6 p.m. or e-mail: sbolle@ican.net (#)

June 1 Dutch worship service led by Rev. John G. Klomps, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster,** Ont.

June 4 Organ and oboe recital by Jonathan Oldengarm and Naomi Struik, 12 noon, St. Andrew's Presb. Church, **Kitchener**, Ont. Info.: (519) 725-9514.

June 18 "Cypress Gardens Winter Ministry (Florida)" picnic, 10 a.m., Southside Park, **Woodstock**, Ont. Info.: (519) 475-4946.

June 29 Organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, 12 noon, St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral, **London**, Ont. Info.: (519) 725-9514.

Personal

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Job Opportunities

DORDT COLLEGE

Staff Positions

Radio Station News Director

KDCR, the Dordt College 100,000-watt FM radio station, is seeking a Radio News Director. Responsibilities include supervision of the KDCR radio news department, on-air announcing, and possible teaching assignments. A master's degree in mass communication and on-air experience are preferred. A specific job description is available. Qualified persons committed to a Reformed, Biblical perspective and educational philosophy are invited to send a letter of application, resume, audition tape, and samples of writing by June 15.

Farm Steward

The agriculture department is seeking a farm steward for the 160-acre Agriculture Stewardship Center. Responsibilities include the day-to-day operation of crop and livestock enterprises for education and research. A master's degree and farm management experience are preferred. The farm steward works closely with faculty, students, and the college constituency. Qualified persons committed to a Reformed, Biblical perspective and educational philosophy are invited to send a letter of interest and curriculum vitae by June 15.

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
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Why not take advantage of our **Calendar of Events** for your next event?

News

Cambridge youth cement relationships in Maryland

Bert Witvoet

CAMBRIDGE, Ont. — Ralph Koops had to struggle a bit with the idea that a deed ministry in the Appalachian mountains by young members of the church he pastors answers to the missionary call of Matthew 28, but he eventually relented and came along.

"I feel very strongly about the verbal side of witnessing," says Koops, who was asked by his church council that he and his wife go along for a week-long work project involving young people from the church.

Koops did mostly cement work, which is the kind of work he used to do before he became a not so concrete preacher. His wife, Anne, did house painting.

The most important purpose of the project was to allow youth from Maranatha Christian Reformed Church an opportunity to serve others and to give low-income people a hand up. So 21 young people and their leaders gave up their spring vacation and spent a week restoring four houses for the Interfaith Consortium of Greater Cumberland Inc., a non-profit agency.

COURTESY RALPH KOOPS

Cambridge volunteers bond and ham it up

Cumberland, Maryland, is an economically depressed city of 25,000 nestled in Maryland's narrow panhandle between Pennsylvania and West Virginia. It was chosen because of its needs and because the Cambridge group could tie its work into work done by other Christian agencies.

"The project cost quite a bit," says Koops, but most of the funds were raised through dinners, auctions, church and local business support.

Koops led Bible studies every day with the young people and enjoyed the communal singing. One of the lessons on a letter to the church of Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7) asked the young people to compare the Maranatha church of Cambridge to the Ephesian church. Young people were also asked to share the highlights and/or disappointments of the day.

But there was little or no interaction with local people, says Koops. His Word-ministry emphasis finally settled for the knowledge that other Christian local groups could benefit from his group's deed ministry.

The Cambridge group slept in one of the houses they were restoring, which meant there were lots of pranks before the Sandman could do his job. There were regular pillow fights to start off the night. Koops, who slept (tried to sleep) in the attic with six other guys, woke up one morning to find that he had been tied to his bunk with duct tape.

Never one to decry the antics of young people, Koops values the whole experience of work and fun because it brought the young people closer together, and they learned to work for others. And that's what a pastor likes to see happen.

Happy flock, happy shepherd.

Study finds little change in religious beliefs of scientists

SEATTLE, Wash. (EP) — Though a majority of U.S. scientists do not believe in God, about 40 per cent do — a statistic that has remained unchanged for 80 years.

Edward Larson, a University of Georgia historian, and Larry Witham of Seattle's Discovery Institute, replicated a 1916 survey by James Leuba, which at the time, shocked the nation with the finding that most scientists did not believe in God. Leuba predicted that as education improved, people would be less likely to believe in a Supreme Being.

"To test that belief, we replicated Leuba's survey as exactly as possible," Larson and Witham wrote in an article for the science journal *Nature*. "The result: about 40 per cent of scientists still believe in a personal God and an afterlife. In both surveys, roughly 45 per cent disbelieved and 15 per cent were doubters (agnostic)."

The researchers surveyed 1,000 randomly chosen scientists listed in the reference work "American Men and Women of Science," using the current version of the 1910 work Leuba used. Scientists were asked if they believed in a God who answered prayers, in an afterlife, and in immortality.

Astronomers, physicists least likely to believe

"Today, even more than in 1916, most scientists have no use for God or an afterlife," they concluded. "But to the extent that both surveys are accurate readings, traditional Western theism has not lost its place among U.S. scientists, despite their intellectual preoccupation with material reality. Americans will doubtless be pleased to know that as many as 40 per cent of scientists agree with them about God and an afterlife."

The 1996 study found that mathematicians are the most likely to believe in God (44.6 per cent), while physicists and astronomers are the least likely. In Leuba's day, biologists were least likely to believe in God.

News Digest

Canada's Year of Asia Pacific

OTTAWA — The Canadian government has designated 1997 as Canada's Year of Asia Pacific, to celebrate the importance of the Asia Pacific region to Canada as a nation.

The main goals are: to celebrate the cultures of more than two million Canadians of Asia Pacific origin; to promote awareness and understanding of the Asia Pacific region through widespread presentation of its cultures in Canada; and to enhance trade and cultural relations between the region and Canada.

Goose lays golden egg

TORONTO — A Toronto man found a goose that laid a $60 egg, so to speak. In late April, a man walked into a donut shop in downtown Toronto and threatened to kill the goose he was carrying unless someone gave him $50, reports the *Toronto Star*. Lisa Volkov, a customer, walked with the man to a bank machine and withdrew $60 for him. The man shoved the goose at the woman after she gave him the money. Humane society workers released the goose, which was unhurt, near Lake Ontario.

"I know a lot of people are looking at the light side of this, but this lady is out $60," said Detective Dave Needham. "Technically, under the Criminal Code, it is extortion."

Honesty pays off

ZURICH, Switz. (AP) — An honest baggage handler at Zurich's airport turned in a misplaced container holding $10.7 million worth of diamonds from Zaire. His pleased boss gave him a reward on the spot: a mere $50. Swissair spokesperson Herbert Schmell confirmed that the handler found an unlabelled, locked container in an area meant for empty ones. When the man and his boss opened the container, they were astonished to find sacks full of uncut diamonds. Schmell says it was a regular shipment, but an advisory notifying Zurich that it was to forward the shipment to London failed to arrive. "Without the notice, nobody was looking for it," said Schmell.